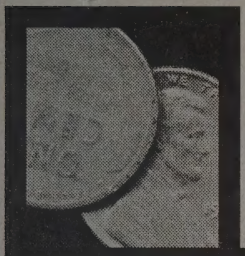
- Independent 8/27-9/2



by Malcolm McCollum

Opinion

Exercising that First Amendment

Straight Pride

Gay Rights — 2. Activities

Press coverage of this year's gay pride parade got Ed Bircham so upset that he bought an ad to express his outrage. The ad appeared in the very newspaper whose coverage it criticized, a paper in which Mr. Bircham advertises copiously and regularly. It's hard to believe such an ad didn't carry a message to the paper's editor as well as to the general public, the message being "Quit publicizing people I despise, or I'll find another outlet for my advertising dollars."

Gays have good reason to stand up and say what they have to say, which is that they're human beings who deserve respect and equal treatment. For a long time in this town, they didn't have to demonstrate to make that point.

When I was 17, a high school English teacher made a pass at me. He was a man I admired and learned from, and I had ignored the gossip and vicious jokes about him until he presented me with an unmistakable proposal.

Rather than temptation, I felt embarrassment, sadness and a strong desire to be somewhere else. I had no inclination to go along with the teacher's proposal, no curiosity about what the experience would be like. I felt like someone being offered caviar who could not see it as anything but fish eggs. I was terminally heterosexual. That was what I learned from that teacher, though I learned many other things from him that have been much more useful and important.

What that teacher did was wrong for two reasons: one, I was a kid; two, I was a student of his. People with experience and power have no business offering sex to those who have neither. It would have been just as wrong if that teacher had been a woman. The abuse of power would have been the same.

I've thought about this incident because I've been listening to the crusaders against homosexuality in this town for quite a few years now. They seem to regard homosexuality as a "lifestyle" — that is, as a matter of choice, like collecting stamps rather than baseball cards, or becoming a driver of monster trucks rather than an orchid gardener. They seem to believe that homosexuals have gravely considered their options and decided that, all in all, they'd prefer to be gay.

If that were the case, then it would mean that heterosexuals had necessarily gone through the same process of choice but, after agonizing over the tempting alternatives, had come down on the "right" side. If being gay is a matter of choice, so must be being straight.

My own experience is so contrary to this view that I want to issue a challenge to Mr. Bircham, Mr. Perkins, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Tebedo, and to any others of their persuasion. Tell us, sirs, about your own encounters with homosexual temptation, and about how you were able to resist. Your accounts of these personal dramas would be of inestimable value as inspiration and would strongly support your point of view.

If, on the other hand, you've never experienced the "temptation" of homosexuality, then maybe you should quiet down for a while and consider what it would be like if your own sexual orientation were subject to public scorn and ridicule and hatred. How would you react to that state of affairs, gentlemen?

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Did you know?

$300
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2 | $1300
$650 x 120,000,000 = $78,00

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800 PERSONS DIE EACH MONTH FROM LAN

SOURCE: US DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMA

*MERELY AN ESTIMATE ON THE COST OF

PERKINS WATCH

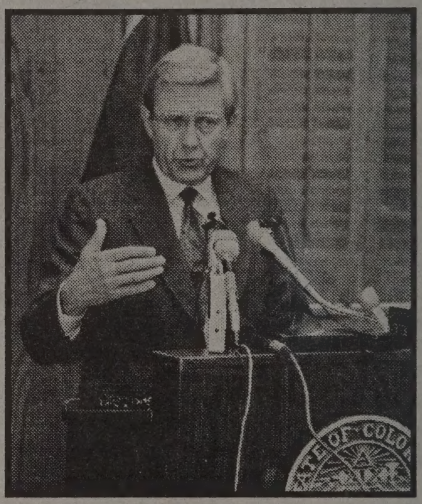
CFV joins the fringe to push impeac

Colorado for Family Values is continuing to push its call to impeach the Supreme Court justices that shot down Amendment 2, but some wonder whether its positions have pushed the group into the outer fringes of sensibility.

CFV's presentation at last weekend's fifth annual "Steeling the Mind of America" conference in Vail deigned to demonstrate how Supreme Court justices have, in the past, been impeached and "what little it would take to again call them on the carpet." CFV leaders have called for impeachment since the U.S. Supreme Court last year declared unconstitutional the 1992 statewide law barring gays and lesbians from seeking protected status.

CFV president Will Perkins and affiliated author Mark Olsen appeared alongside 10 other speakers whose topics included "Biblical UFOs and the Coming Deception," "50 Scientific Reasons Evolution Is Wrong," "Dark Secrets of the United Nations" and "The New Age Death Grip on America" at the Vail conference, sponsored by an Idaho-based ministry, Compass International. Providing the weekend entertainment was a group called the Y'shua Lamb Dancers, performing "He's Alive."

Perkins was out of town and could not be reached for comment by press time. But on Monday, a Compass International representative who would only identify himself as "Brett" described CFV's contribution as "very convincing."



Perkins is jerkin' with the Supreme Court

"We had an extremely stunned audience," Brett said, declining to provide any details. The press was banned from the conference, he said, because the group has endured "unappreciative media" in the past. The nonprofit ministry has held the conferences in the ritzy mountain resort for the past five years, and an unprecedented 1,200 attended this year, Brett said.

Less than two years ago, CFV founder and then-director Kevin Tebedo abruptly

LABOR

Opinion

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I've offered my own little story only after long consideration, because I don't believe my sexual preferences are anyone's business. I can't imagine marching in a parade for straight pride. What's to be proud of? It would be like shooting off fireworks because I have gray hair. And why would such a parade need to happen? We straight people are in the majority. We don't need to demonstrate; we can just sit back and condemn anybody who differs from us.

If we straight people never imposed our sexual desires on anyone who didn't welcome our advances, if we never used our power, authority, money or physical strength to get what we wanted, then maybe we'd rate a self-congratulatory parade. Until that happy day, maybe we should all stop marching and pontificating and indulging our pridefulness, and concentrate on the difficult task of acting with kindness, restraint and compassion.

Malcolm McCollum is a minister of the Universal Life Church.

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